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Affairs in Virginia in 1626.

[S. P. O. COLO. VOL. 4, No. 10.]

Communication from the Governor of Virginia, May 17, 1626.

RIGHT HONORABLE *

According to your Lordships commands we have sent a perticular of all the Lands, either graunted by Pattent here or otherwise laid out and claymed, either by publique Societies or private persons † as far as we could by any meanes informe ourselves; That Land should be taken upp to keep off others, and bye wast, is a greate inconvenience, and besides those that are unable to plant their ground wee find a greate parte either dead or gon for England, and none here in any likelyhood to plant them: for redress wher of if all such bee compelled either to manure their Lands within such reasonable tyme as your Lordships shall thinke fitt, or otherwise to forfitt their right in that perticular Land, we conceive it will be a notable meanes of peopleing the country: And to moderate the excesive ingrossing of Lands and to helpe in tyme towards the raising of a publique Stocke, that course of reserving quit rents uppon the Pattents wee conceive to have been well projected; and that to such as shall have Land due by sending servants hereafter ther may be reserved a peny uppon an acre, ‡ for reserving lesse they will arrise to no proportion considerable in so greate a worke.

Whoever shall take a reviewe of the managing of the affaires of this plantation from the beginning untill this tyme, may easily

* Addressed to the Privy Council in England. This report describes the condition of affairs in Virginia, subsequent to the period covered by the Discourse of the Old Company printed in the first volume of the Magazine.

† This list will be found in an appendix to Burk's History of Virginia, and also in Colonial Records of Virginia, State Senate Document, extra, 1874.

‡ The established quit-rent was one shilling for every fifty acres.

finde that the slow proceeding of the groeth thereof, is not so much to bee attributed to the difficultye in the worke it selfe (though in ittselfe much subject to casualty and uncertainty) as to the improper and preposterous courses that have been followed. The maine reason whereof, as we conceive, hath bene that the advises and informacon from the counsell here, have not had soe much credit with those in England, which supperintended the affaires of Virginia, as the contrary misinformacons of privat Planters, either out of ther perticuller ends or ignorance which also have bene the better received partly by reason of the factions at home, partly because in soe greate a distance the conceptions of them and those here are not always the same. But since it hath pleased his most excellent Majestie to silence faction and that your Lordships have pleased to command our advice what are the directest waies for settling a firme plantation, which gives no hope that wee shal be better believed then heretofore, wee shall laye downe the cheife heads, which the conference of former opinions delivered uppon this point with the perpetuall course of experience uppon the place (which is the most infallible guide) doe approve and demonstrate, submitting our opinions their in to your Lordships grave wisdomes.

We have found by experience since the massacre as wee alsoe did then foresee and advertize, that being seated in the course wee are in smale bodies, neither is it possible to prevent the suddaine incursions of the Salvages, nor secure any range for cattel, which is a generall discouragement to the Planter, though they out of their too much affection to their privat dividents, have bene the cause of repossessing their quitted Plantations; for redress of which inconveniences wee know no other course, then to secure the forrest by running a pallizade* from Marttin's hundred to Kiskyack, which is not above six miles over, and placeing houses at convenient distance, with sufficient gard of men to secure the Necke whereby wee shall gaine free from pos-

* This Palisade was subsequently built by William Claiborne and Samuel Matthews. (See Colonial Papers, Vol. 4, No. 10, II. British State Paper Office; also, Sainsberry Abstracts, Virginia State Library, 1634, page 72.) References to the site of this palisade will be found in York County Records, Virginia State Library, Vol. 1631-1694, pages 65-75.

sibility of any annoyance by the Salvages, a rich ceramite of ground contayneing little lesse the 300.000 acres of land, which will feed such numbers of people, with plentifull range for Cattle as may bee able to defend the plantation against any enemy whatsoever.

The readiest and certainest way for accomplishment ther of, is to agree in certainty with some experienced in the country, for undertaking it which wil be £1200 in readie money, for the building of the pallizado and houses, and £100 yearly for mainetayning them; and because untill this worke be effected all the rest is to little purpose, wee have reduced the agreement to a certainty, which wee here inclosed send your Lordships, humbly desiring an answer by the first shipping: It wilbe necessary that within that compase of ground, no greate proportion of Land be graunted to any one man, because if hee dye or leave the country, the land must lye wast and uncultivated, especially the greate quantities challenged by the Socyetie of Marttins hundred (beeing neare a third of the Forrest) will make the worke fruitlesse, excepte they for soe generall a good, wilbe pleased to remitt a part of their perticuller right and interest; when this is secured it wilbe requisitt that it bee stockt immediatly with Cattle, Horses and Asses as the foundation of all other greate workes which are in order of tyme necessary to follow this.

Provision being thus made for our heath and securitie the next must bee to provide against farraigne invasion by building forts and fortified towns at and neere the mouth of either river, for which purpose it will be necessary to send over yearlie 200 men at least with commanders and Ingeneers of skill and sufficiencie: from the forrest soe stockt wilbe supplied meanes for carriage of the materials, and all necessities for raysing of the works, and plentifull dyett for the people, to incourage and strengthen them in those heavy laboures which els will goe but slowly forward.

For souldiours to goe uppon the Indians their cannot bee lesse then 200 and the number to bee kept full and furnished, with all things requisite. By these forces wee shall have some revenge uppon those fugitives for soe much bloud spilt of our country men and by degree whollie extripat them and better perswaide the other salvages (not interested in the quarrell), to desire our friendship and protection, the first step to their convercon. But

that a running laboures much lesse their cattle, as hath bene generally fancied; or that it is possible to see any notable effects of such an Armye untill from the forrest wee be furnished with Horses and Asses to carry munition provisions and such men as may be hurt or sicke, since wee must chase them within land, hath no ground or probabillity.

The like we may saye for discoveryes by land, which are of greate hope both for the riches of the mountaines and probabilities of finding the passage to the South Sea, which cannot bee attempted without those necessary meanes mentioned, which alwaies presuppose the wyning of the Forrest, therefore wee humbly desire that those preparations may bee supplied out of hand, for bringing these workes to their due perfection; for encouragement of Volunteers to people the country, nothing wilbe more availeable then the safety and plentie that the forrest afords them (not that all men should bee compelled to live their, but that such as are able to defend their Plantacons may seate themselves where they best like) by which meanes the country groweing populous, divers staple comodities wilbe raised, since all neither can nor must bee suffered to tend Tobacco: that all comodities are not to be set uppon as Adventures which are esteemed such in populous countrys, but a choise must be made, as wyne, silke, salt, fish and iron, and it were better seriously to apply ourselves to the most hopefull and beneficiall then to graspe all at once, and those are rather to bee referred to the industries of privat men, then the publique stocke to be expended uppon them, only an extreordinary reward would be proposed to those that should first bring them to perfection. In the meane tyme it is necessary that the prise of Tobacco be upheld by prohibition of all other but ours and the Sommer Islands. And because the rates of comodities (notwithstanding the sole importacon of Tobacco) are soe high and supplies uncertaine, wee humbly desire, if it may soe stand with your Lordshipps approbations, that their may bee a constant Magazin furnished yearely with all such comodities as we shall from hence advertize, and wee doubt not their wilbe found Adventurers that will furnish us at 25 p. centum gaine, accepting our tobacco at 3s p. lb. which alsoe wilbe a singuler meanes to encourage men for settling themselves in this

country, especially if the Magazin may furnish them with servants at reasonable prices.

We find that nothing hath hindred the proceedings of Artts Manuall trades, and staple comodities more then the want of mony amoungst us; which makes all men apply themselves to Tobacco, because their is not Tobacco (which is our money) all the yeare to paie workmen, and the recovery of debts at the crope, is not without trouble, and the condition of what they shall receave uncertaine. But the groundwork of all is, that their bee a sufficient publique stock to goe through with soe greate a worke which wee cannot compute to bee lesse then £20 000 a yeare, certaine for some yeares: for by itt must bee mainetained the Governer and counsell and other officers here, the forrest wonne and stockt with cattle, fortifications raysed, a running armye mainetayned, discoveries made by Sea and land, and all other things requisitt in soe mainefould a business. And because the charges formerly bestowed upon this Plantacon have not had the successe as might incourage a farther expense (which though in greate part may bee attributed to the usuall difficulties incident to new plantacons, yet as wee thinke it cannot bee denied, but that in the bestowing of the publique treasure, their hath bene some tymes wilfull abuses, some tymes errors and mistakings, because it was not possible for them soe far off to direct it to the best benefitt and advantage) wee humbly desire, that a good proporcon thereof may bee whollie att the disposall of the Governer, Counsell and general Assembly in Virginia, for the effecting of such publique workes as your Lordships shall appoint, not doubting (with God's assistance) by the accomplishment thereof to approve unto your Lordships our carefull endeavours and industries.

If we should have enlarged ourselves upon every one of these points, and have added such other perticulers as might bee any waye considerable, wee should have too much presumed on your Lordships patience. And we have bene the shorter in regard of Sir Thomas Wyatt his returne by these ships, whome wee have earnestly desired by his more full relacon to informe your Lordships what ever this may fall short in, whoe wee doubt not will cleaire the objections that may bee made to the

contrary of these our opinions. Thus hoping that his most Excellent Majestie wilbe pleased to yeald his gracious supportance to this worthie account, reserved by the devine providence to bee perfected and consummate by his Royal hands: And beseeching your Lordshipps that our humble advisements and requests may receive a favorable acceptance and accomplishment. Wee humbly take our leaves.

Your Lordshipps very humble servants.

James Cittie, the
17th May 1626.

(Signed.)

FRANCIS WYATT,
FRANCIS WEST,
ROGER SMYTH,
RALPH HAMOR,
SAM MATHEWES,
WILLM. CLAYTOWNE [Claybourne].

**The First Legislative Assembly in America—Sitting
at Jamestown, Virginia, 1619.**

A stranger visiting, for the first time, our Republic during this year of grateful celebration of the discovery of America, cannot fail to be struck with its millions of people who are educated, intelligent, and prosperous, and who are not only contented with their form of government, but devoted to it. If the visitor be of a philosophical cast of mind, he will enquire for the vital principle which has sustained and developed our civil institutions, and brought them and our people into such happy and prosperous relations. To such an inquiry, he will soon find an answer. He will be informed that the principle which pervades our institutions, and to which we owe our happiness, as a people, is the right of the people to govern themselves, a right exercised through their chosen representatives. The exercise of this right is based upon and stimulates the growth of the intelligence and virtue of the people, and as it involves the right of the majority to rule, it exemplifies the Christian doctrine of the brotherhood of mankind, and of their equality in the sight of God, who is no respecter of persons. It involves also another great principle, namely, that rulers are but servants of the